

MARRIED LOVE

By

LORD DAWSON

Physician to King George V.

and

DEAN W. R. INGE

of St. Paul's Cathedral

Published by

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*Including Comment on Lord Dawson's Paper
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One of the most notable features of the Church Congress at Birmingham was a frank and emphatic address by Lord Dawson on the relationship of the sexes. Lord Dawson, who is the King's physician, analysed the grave problems arising out of love and marriage, and expressed his conviction that Birth Control had come to stay. He suggested that there should be added to the causes of marriage in the Prayer Book "the complete realisation of the love of this man and this woman one for another," and in support of his contention declared that sex love between husband and wife—apart from parenthood—was something to prize and cherish for its own sake. The Lambeth Conference, he remarked, "envisaged a love invertebrate and joyless," whereas, in his view, natural passion in wedlock was not a thing to be ashamed of, or unduly repressed. Lord Dawson's speech, which we publish in full below, proved to be the prevailing topic of discussion in the subsequent proceedings at the Congress. The Bishop of Birmingham, who in addition to presiding over the Congress, is president of the National Council of Public Morals stated, in an interview, that "there is in the physical union of the married couple who are one before God a spiritual side which should spring from

the perfect oneness, and that perfect oneness is not only a spiritual oneness; it is a oneness also in the expression of a pure passion, which is quite distinct from sensuality. In these ways I think Lord Dawson and I have travelled on the same road and have worked together, and I could not find anything with which I was in conflict in the matter. The Church really, I think, feels the same thing as Lord Dawson, but what the Church is afraid of is making the marriage tie omit the consideration of the procreation of children, and simply living only for the other side. That is what the Church has been fighting against. It is a matter that is still considerably sub judice, but the Church is quite satisfied that certain means are wrong, and ought not to be used.”

LORD DAWSON'S speech was as follows:—“May I make certain preliminary observations? Painters and poets depict Love to us in golden hues and arouse in us happy and sympathetic, and, I trust, reminiscent response, helping us to realise that life without the love of man and woman would be like the world without sunshine. Though, therefore, the social student in his approach to the subject is not helped by the beauties of colour and song, it behooves him to avoid undue solemnity and still more an air of portentous foreboding. One of the difficulties of this subject is that those who are called upon to give counsel are apt to forget the strength of the forces to be dealt with, for it is during youth especially

that sex attractions are so powerful, and may I add, so delightful. Middle-aged people may be divided into three classes.

Those who are still young.

Those who have forgotten they were young.

Those who were never young.

And it is with the first class before my eyes that I am privileged to address this audience. The real problems before us are those of sex love and child love; and by sex love I mean that love which involves intercourse or the desire for such. It is necessary to my argument to emphasize that sex love is one of the clamant dominating forces of the world. Not only does history show the destinies of nations and dynasties determined by its sway—but here in our every-day life we see its influence, direct or indirect, forceful and ubiquitous beyond aught else. Any statesmanlike review, therefore, will recognize that here we have an instinct so fundamental, so imperious, that its influence is a fact which has to be accepted; suppress it you cannot. You may guide it into healthy channels, but an outlet it will have, and if that outlet is inadequate or unduly obstructed irregular channels will be forced. We uphold the control of sex love outside marriage by the individual, and that we are right in so doing is incontestable. But let us realize that in practice, self-control has a breaking point, and that if in any community marriage is difficult or late of attainment, an increase of irregular unions will inevitably result. That the Church recognizes this is shown by the statement that marriage

was instituted to prevent sin. In considering the problem of illicit intercourse and its attendant evils, the social conditions that make for a wholesome life are of more efficiency than Acts of Parliament to suppress vice. My desire, however, on this occasion is rather to consider sex love in relation to marriage.

SEX LOVE IN RELATION TO MARRIAGE

THE FIRST POINT I wish to make is that people need more knowledge of the scientific bearings of sex relations and more clearly defined guidance of their rightful purport and practice. They are imperfectly provided with both. We talk about instructing the young when we are neither clear nor agreed amongst ourselves. All are agreed that union of body should be in association with union of mind and soul; all are agreed that the rearing of children is a pre-eminent purpose. But what purport is there beyond these? Here there is a lack of precision. What does the Church service say? It says, 'Marriage was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.' Now this is a very negative blessing. It implies that where unfortunately people cannot be continent marriage gives the best way out—enables them to get relief within the pale of virtue. This attitude affords to sex love no positive purport or merit of its own, and is in striking conflict with the facts of life through the ages—facts which carry social ap-

proval. The recent pronouncement of the Church as set forth in Resolution 68 of the Lambeth Conference seems to imply condemnation of sex love as such, and to imply sanction of sex love only as a means to an end—namely, procreation, though it must be admitted it lacks that clearness of direction which in so vital a matter one would have expected. It almost reminds me of one of those diplomatic formulæ which is not intended to be too clear. Allow me to quote from it:—

“In opposition to the teaching which under the name of science and religion encourages married people in the deliberate cultivation of sexual union as an end in itself, we steadfastly uphold what must always be regarded as the governing considerations of Christian marriage. One is the primary purpose for which marriage exists—namely, the continuation of the race, through the gift and heritage of children; the other is the paramount importance in married life of deliberate and thoughtful self-control.”

Now the plain meaning of this statement is that sexual union should take place for the sole purpose of procreation, that sexual union as an end in itself—not, mind you, the only end—(there we should all agree), but sexual union as an end in itself is to be condemned. That means that sexual intercourse should rightly take place only for the purpose of procreation. Quite a large family could easily result from quite a few sexual unions. For the rest the couple should be celibate. Any intercourse not having procreation as its intention is ‘sexual union as an end in itself,’ and, therefore, by inference condemned by the Lambeth Conference.

LET US RECALL OUR OWN LOVE

THINK OF THE FACTS of life. Let us recall our own love—our marriage, our honeymoon. Has not sexual union over and over again been the physical expression of our love without thought or intention of procreation? Have we all been wrong? Or is it that the Church lacks that vital contact with the realities of life which accounts for the gulf between her and the people? The love envisaged by the Lambeth Conference is an invertebrate, joyless thing—not worth the having. Fortunately, it is in contrast to the real thing as practised by clergy and laity. Fancy an ardent lover (and what respect have you for a lover who is not ardent)—the type you would like your daughter to marry—virile, ambitious, chivalrous—a man who means to work hard and love hard. Fancy putting before these lovers—eager and expectant of the joys before them—the Lambeth picture of marriage. Do you expect to gain their confidence? Authority, and I include under authority the Churches, will never gain the allegiance of the young unless their attitude is more frank, more courageous, and more in accordance with realities. And, to tell you the truth, I am not sure that too much prudent self-restraint suits love and its purport.

Romance and deliberate self-control do not, to my mind, rhyme very well together. A touch of madness to begin with does no harm. Heaven knows, life sobers it soon enough. If you don't start life with a head of steam you won't get far.

Sex love has, apart from parenthood, a purport of its own. It is something to prize and to cherish for its own sake. It is an essential part of health and happiness in marriage. And now, if you will allow me, I will carry this argument a step further. If sexual union is a gift of God it is worth learning how to use it. Within its own sphere it should be cultivated so as to bring physical satisfaction to both, not merely to one.

DURABILITY OF THEIR MARRIAGE TIE

THE ATTAINMENT of mutual and reciprocal joy in their relations constitutes a firm bond between two people, and makes for durability of their marriage tie. Reciprocity in sex love is the physical counterpart of sympathy. More marriages fail from inadequate and clumsy sex love than from too much sex love. The lack of proper understanding is in no small measure responsible for the unfulfilment of connubial happiness, and every degree of discontent and unhappiness may, from this cause, occur, leading to rupture of the marriage bond itself. How often do medical men have to deal with these difficulties, and how fortunate if such difficulties are disclosed early enough in married life to be rectified. Otherwise how tragic may be their consequences, and many a case in the Divorce Court has thus had its origin. To the foregoing contentions, it might be objected, you are encouraging passion. My reply would be, passion is a worthy possession—most men, who are any good, are capable of passion. You all enjoy ardent and passionate love in art and literature. Why not give it a place

in real life? Why some people look askance at passion is because they are confusing it with sensuality. Sex love without passion is a poor, lifeless thing. Sensuality, on the other hand, is on a level with gluttony—a physical excess—detached from sentiment, chivalry, or tenderness. It is just as important to give sex love its place as to avoid its over-emphasis. Its real and effective restraints are those imposed by a loving and sympathetic companionship, by the privileges of parenthood, the exacting claims of career and that civic sense which prompts men to do social service. Now that the revision of the Prayer Book is receiving consideration, I should like to suggest with great respect an addition made to the objects of marriage in the Marriage Service, in these terms ‘The complete realization of the love of this man and this woman, the one for the other.’

BIRTH CONTROL IS HERE TO STAY

AND NOW, IF YOU will permit, I will pass on to consider the all important question of Birth Control. First, I will put forward with confidence the view that Birth Control is here to stay. It is an established fact, and for good or evil has to be accepted. Although the extent of its application can be and is being modified, no denunciations will abolish it. Despite the influence and condemnations of the Church, it has been practised in France for well over half a century, and in Belgium and other Roman Catholic countries is extending. And if the Roman Catholic Church, with its compact organization, its

power of authority, and its discipline, cannot check this procedure, is it likely that Protestant Churches will be able to do so, for Protestant religions depend for their strength on the conviction and esteem they establish in the heads and hearts of their people. The reasons which lead parents to limit their offspring are sometimes selfish, but more often honorable and cogent.

The desire to marry and to rear children well equipped for life's struggle, limited incomes, the cost of living, burdensome taxation, are forcible motives and further, amongst the educated classes there is the desire of women to take a part in life and their husbands' careers, which is incompatible with oft-recurring children. It is idle to decry illicit intercourse and interpose obstacles to marriage at one and the same time. But, say many whose opinions are entitled to our respect: 'Yes—Birth Control may be necessary, but the only Birth Control which is justifiable is voluntary abstention from connubial relations.' Such abstention would be either ineffective, or, if effective, impracticable, and harmful to health and happiness. To limit the size of a family to, say four children during a child-bearing period of 20-25 years, would be to impose on a married couple an amount of abstention which, for long periods, would almost be equivalent to celibacy, and when one remembers that owing to economic reasons the abstention would have to be most strict during the earlier years of married life, when desires are strongest, I maintain a demand is being made

which, for the mass of people, it is impossible to meet; that the endeavors to meet it would impose a strain hostile to health and happiness, and carry with them grave dangers to morals.

Imagine a young married couple in love with each other—the parents, say, of one child, who feel they cannot afford another child, for, say, three years, being expected to occupy the same room and to abstain for two years. The thing is preposterous. You might as well put water by the side of a man suffering from thirst, and tell him not to drink it. And, further than that, if the efforts to abstain are seriously made, the strain involved is harmful to health and temper—if the efforts do not succeed, the minds of husband and wife are troubled by doubts and anxieties, which are damaging to their intimate relationships. No—Birth Control by abstention is either ineffective, or, if effective, is pernicious.

BIRTH CONTROL NOT UNNATURAL

I WILL NEXT consider Artificial Control. The forces in modern life which make for Birth Control are so strong that only convincing reasons will make people desist from it. It is said to be unnatural and intrinsically immoral. This word unnatural perplexes me. Why? Civilization involves the chaining of natural forces and their conversion to man's will and uses. Much of medicine and surgery consist of means to overcome nature. When anæsthetics were first used at childbirth there was an outcry on the part of many worthy and religious people that their use under

such circumstances was unnatural and wicked, because God meant woman to suffer the struggles and pains of childbirth. Now we all admit it is right to control the process of childbirth, and to save the mother as much pain as possible. It is no more unnatural to control conception by artificial means than to control childbirth by artificial means. Surely the whole question turns on whether these artificial means are for the good or harm of the individual and the community. Generally speaking, Birth Control before the first child is inadvisable. On the other hand, the justifiable use of Birth Control would seem to be to limit the number of children when such is desirable, and to spread out their arrival in such a way as to serve their true interests and those of their home. Once more, careful distinction needs to be made between the use and the bad effect of the abuse of Birth Control. That its abuse produces grave harm I fully agree—harm to parents, to families, and to the nation. But abuse is not a just condemnation of legitimate use. Over-eating, over-drinking, over-smoking, over-sleeping, over-work do not carry condemnation of eating, drinking, smoking, sleeping, work. But the evils of excessive Birth Control are very real.

MATERNITY

MATERNITY gives to woman her most beautiful attributes. Fancy being mad enough to suppress it. If one watches the woman with one child and all maternity finished before 30

and compare her at 40 with the woman of the same age who has had, say, four children at proper intervals, who usually has the advantage in preservation of youth and beauty? Not the former. On the other hand, it must be admitted that baby after baby every year or 18 months wears and often exhausts a woman's strength. The inference is that the use of Birth Control is good, its abuse bad. Next, the children. Is it even necessary to refer to the failure of the single-child household? Poor little thing! Surrounded by over-anxious parents, spoilt, no children to play with, bored stiff by adults. And then, perhaps, illness, and it may be death—and when it is too late to produce another. Of the many tragedies I met in the war none exceeded that attaching to the loss of only children. It often means the end of all things; nothing to live for—just blank despair. The parents and the home both need children of varying ages. That is the way of happiness and enduring youth. And, lastly, the national aspect may be stated very briefly. If England is not to lose her place in the world, her population must be maintained and increased. Unless fathers and mothers produce an average of over three children, that population will not be maintained. If you say to a young husband and wife with their one or two children, 'Do you like to contemplate that when you both leave life your country will through your action, be worse off than when you entered life?' that is an appeal to patriotism, and likely to be a successful appeal. There are signs of a public opinion forming which

will condemn the selfishness of marriages without their proper heritage of children, but such public opinion will not be strengthened by an indiscriminate condemnation of Birth Control. May I end my speech with an appeal that the Church approach this question, in common with certain others, in the light of modern knowledge and the needs of a new world, and unhampered by traditions which have outworn their usefulness."

SEX AND REPRODUCTION

DEATH RATE BALANCES BIRTH-RATE

IT IS A bad symptom that Lord Dawson's paper at the Birmingham Church Congress, wise and temperate and in perfect taste, should have been received in certain quarters with denunciation. The newspapers which have taken the lead in this agitation have probably mistaken the mind of their public; if not, they cannot be congratulated on their clientele.

In dealing with a subject where so much ignorance and prejudice have been proved to exist, it is best to begin with a dispassionate and colorless statement of elementary facts.

The reproductive capacity of every species is far in excess of the possibility of survival. In some of the lower forms of life the fertility is prodigious. The star-fish (*luida*) has 200 million eggs. "If all the progeny of one oyster survived and multiplied, its great-great-grand-offspring would number 66 with 33 noughts after it and the heap of shells would be eight times the size of our earth."

Fertility and care for offspring usually vary inversely. Sutherland says: "Of species that exhibit no sort of parental care, the average of 49 gives 1,040,000 eggs to a female each year, while among those which make nests or any apology for nests the number is only about 10,000. Among those which have any protective tricks, such as carrying the eggs in pouches,

or attached to the body, or in the mouth, the average number is under 1,000, while among those which . . . bring the young into the world alive an average of 56 eggs is quite sufficient.'

Man is no exception to this rule. Where the natural checks of famine, pestilence, inter-tribal slaughter, and disease operate without hindrance, the equilibrium of population is maintained by a very high birth-rate. In the Middle Ages the births and deaths in the undrained towns were both round about 50 per thousand in each year.

SURPLUS CHILDREN

THERE ARE CITIES in Asia where these conditions still survive. Almost everywhere the numbers press constantly upon the means of subsistence, and children can only survive where there is room for them. In many parts of the world, both in the civilized races of antiquity and among barbarous races in our own days, surplus children are gotten rid of by systematic infanticide.

If we look at old pedigrees, or at old tombstones covered with the names of one family, we shall see that a married pair in England, till the nineteenth century, might expect to lose more than half their children in their own lifetime. These children were of course not murdered, but nothing effective was done to keep them alive.

The population of a country is determined by economic laws, not by the will of individuals. Individuals may exercise choice,

but numbers, like water, find their own level. Every unwanted baby, kept alive by humanitarian interference, drives another baby out of the world or prevents him from coming into it.

Depopulation is a somewhat rare phenomenon, and is generally caused by a change in the climate, exhaustion of the soil, or the diversion of trade routes. The depopulation of Mesopotamia followed necessarily on the destruction of the irrigation system by the Mongol hordes. The physiological infertility which is exterminating the physically splendid races in the South Sea Islands is another matter. It is a rare disease, and the causes of it have not been fully cleared up.

It is of course possible for a nation to increase its numbers by expropriating another nation. Merely to subjugate another nation is worse than useless, because the conquered people, being driven to a lower standard of living, will probably multiply faster than their conquerors. It is no use even to massacre all the fighting men. But if the women and children can be driven from their homes, and their lands seized by the invaders, then no doubt the conquerors may multiply up to the limits imposed by the size and fertility of the occupied territory.

THE RIGHT TO EXPAND

THIS IS THE real meaning of "the right to expand," of which we have heard so much. It is a pleasant prospect, if every nation with a high birth-rate has a "right" to exterminate its neighbors. Perhaps a quotation from Prince

von Buelow's "Imperial Germany" will bring home to my readers what this claim means, and what calamities it has brought upon the world. "The course of events has driven German policy out from the narrow confines of Europe into the wider world. The nation, as it grew, burst the bounds of its old home, and its policy was dictated by its new seeds. The Empire could no longer support the immense mass of humanity within its boundaries. Owing to the enormous increase of population German policy was confronted with a tremendous problem. This had to be solved, if foreign countries were not to profit by the superfluity of German life which the mother country was unable to support." Mr. Harold Cox even says: "In the era upon which we have now entered the one fundamental cause of war is the overgrowth of the world's population."

I do not entirely agree with these two writers because it is impossible for a country to have at any time a much larger population than it can support, but in the main they are right. The supposed duty of multiplication, and the alleged right to expand, are among the chief causes of modern war; and I repeat that if they justify war, it must be a war of extermination, since mere conquest does nothing to solve the problem.

The enormous increase in the population of Europe during the nineteenth century is a phenomenon quite unique in history. It was the result of the industrial revolution, combined with the opening out of new food-producing areas beyond the seas. The two new conditions reacted upon each other. Vast

quantities of commodities could be produced cheaply, and they could be exchanged for food, while the improved methods of transport made the exchange possible and easy.

COUNTRIES FILLING UP

THE PROCESS went on merrily at first because the new countries produced far more food than they needed for themselves. So there was a demand at home for more labor. The State, as shortsighted as governments usually are, applied an artificial stimulus to the birth-rate by a Poor Law which encouraged irresponsible parentage, and permitted the Poor Law guardians to send wagon-loads of little children to work in the factories of the north. Till about the end of the century every new pair of hands in England paid its way on the average, though the birth-rate began to decline, in response to the falling death-rate, after 1878.

But the new countries are getting filled up. The United States can feed itself, but not much more. Even the wheat-fields of Canada and the Argentine are not unlimited. And we in England have long since lost the privileged position in manufacture which we held for a considerable time after the war with Napoleon.

An abnormal era of expansion has reached its natural end. We cannot support more than our present population, and though there are still a few countries where a young Englishman of the right sort may emigrate with decidedly better pros-

pects than he would have at home, there are no longer any wide empty tracts of good land waiting for occupation. Emigration, in a word, is a palliative only; and before long it will cease to be even a palliative. Maps of the world are very delusive; they do not always mark the deserts, and there are many other unpleasant explanations of the empty spaces which look so alluring.

No RACE SUICIDE

THESE, THEN, are the facts. The natural rate of human increase never has been and never can be attained. An equilibrium between births and deaths is the normal state of things; the nineteenth century was not normal, but unique. There are no more empty Americas and Australias, and, equally important, we have no longer any great surplus of manufactured goods, because the producers of those goods have begun to ask why they should not enjoy themselves. The "Expansion of England," over which Sir John Seely gloated so eloquently, was a grand thing while it lasted, except for the barbarians whose lands we took from them, but it has reached its natural and inevitable limit. We must cut our coat according to our cloth and adapt ourselves to changing circumstances.

Till the beginning of the war the birth-rate and death-rate in England declined in parallel lines, the annual increase of population remaining very steady, at about one per cent. per

annum. The utter absurdity of talking about "race suicide" is apparent to anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the subject. The decline in the birth-rate was made necessary by the improvements in sanitation and medical science, which increased the average duration of life by about one-third. The birth-rate declined by about one-third, the maximum in the 'seventies being 36 per thousand, and the minimum before the war just under 24.

